

News Clippings

October 14, 2008

Emergency Response

Indianapolis

Police Report Spike In Officer Impersonators

[Read the Article](#)

Fire

Columbus

Fire district case sent to higher court

[Read the Article](#)

Richmond

Couple 'were always together'

[Read the Article](#)

Richmond

Fire in mobile home kills young couple

[Read the Article](#)

Flooding

Gary 1

Flood benefits run out for Ind. Families

[Read the Article](#)

Gary 2

Flood families move out of hotels, into shelters

[Read the Article](#)

Gary 3

Munster church helps flood victims

[Read the Article](#)

Gary 4

Some Lake Station flooding victims moved from hotel to homeless shelter

[Read the Article](#)

Michigan City 5

FEMA, state officials warn of post-flood scams

[Read the Article](#)

Munster 6

Church's fundraiser for flood victims encourages more volunteering, donating

[Read the Article](#)

Munster 7

Indiana residents pledge to rebuild

[Read the Article](#)

Severe Weather**Charlestown**

FEMA providing help for residents applying for storm aid

[Read the Article](#)

Crothersville

FEMA Adds Jackson County To Disaster Aid List

[Read the Article](#)

New Albany

Floyd County still waiting for disaster declaration

[Read the Article](#)

TheIndyChannel.com

Police Report Spike In Officer Impersonators

Indianapolis Police Investigating Two Impersonator Cases

INDIANAPOLIS -- Two recent cases involving police impersonators highlight a growing crime trend in central Indiana, law enforcement officials said.

The Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center tracked 36 cases across the state of people impersonating police officers over the past 18 months, [6News' Jack Rinehart](#) reported.

"There is a terrorism concern," said agency spokesman Douglas Johnson. "I think that when these incidents happen it decreases the confidence the public has in their paid public servants and that's not tolerable for those of us who are working very hard and doing our jobs in accordance with the law."

In one of the cases being investigated by Indianapolis police, the impersonator pulled over his victim and eventually got away with \$800 cash from the man's wallet.

"He got out of the car, identified himself as a police officer, produced a badge," said Detective Bob Pearsey. "He said the right things that would lead the driver to believe that he was a police officer." To make a legal traffic stop in Indiana, the officer's police cruiser must be marked or the officer himself must be in a plainly visible uniform, officials said.

"If it's not clearly marked as a police car and you see the individual and he's not in a uniform, call 911 or drive to the nearest police station or somewhere in public where you can get some help," said Sgt. Matthew Mount.

Officials at the Fusion Center said that police impersonators usually have a past for current employment in security work or they've gained knowledge of police work through criminal activity.

[Back to Emergency Response](#)

Wednesday, October 08, 2008

Fire district case sent to higher court Recusal of Chief Justice requested

Wednesday, October 08, 2008

As expected, the attorney in a lawsuit filed by five county residents claiming that the countywide fire protection district was created illegally has requested that the case be transferred to the Indiana Supreme Court.

According to Kurt Young, attorney for the five plaintiffs-Ronald Sanders, Paul Hardin, Dallas "Dak" Kelp, Vernon "Bernie" McGaha and Lucinda Bray-the paperwork was submitted late last week and asks the state's highest court to overturn the Indiana Court of Appeals decision upholding the September 2007 creation of the fire district by the county's Board of Commissioners.

In addition, Mr. Young and his clients are asking that Chief Justice Randall T. Shepard recuse himself from the case, based on his participation as co-chair of the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform, committee established by Governor Mitch Daniels to research the streamlining of local government.

In their request, the plaintiffs cite a footnote in the original ruling by Special Judge Roderick D. McGillivray, the trial court judge in the case, that mentioned Chief Justice Shepard's role on a statewide committee that recommended transferring the fire service responsibilities from township trustees throughout the state to a county's executive and the creation of a countywide body to oversee public safety.

The plaintiffs add that Governor Daniels, through then-Fire Marshal Roger Johnson and others from within the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, have supported the creation of the Brown County Fire Protection District and question Chief Justice Shepard's ability to be impartial in this case, having served as an advocate for the governor's local government reform issues.

The question presented to the Supreme Court is whether or not the Court of Appeals erred when it upheld Judge McGillivray's decision that a county legislative body-specifically, the Board of Commissioners-can create a fire district without first being presented a petition signed by a freeholders within the proposed fire district requesting its establishment.

Mr. Young argues that the decision made by the Court of Appeals "is in conflict with and a significant departure from well-settled rules of statutory construction, and it erroneously decides a previously undecided question with statewide impact."

The Court of Appeals agreed with Judge McGillivray, who interpreted Indiana Code to permit two methods of creating a fire protection district, one by freeholder petition and the other by a county's legislative body.

In concluding the latter, the Court of Appeals mentioned that the creation of a fire protection district would fall under the Home Rule Act, which grants governmental bodies the powers required "for the

effective operation of government as to local affairs."

The plaintiffs disagree, asking why, if a county legislative body can use its discretion in choosing whether or not to create a fire protection district without a petition, the law spells out the requirements for a petition.

"The answer is obvious," the plaintiffs state in court documents. "The creation of a fire protection district is the creation of a new municipal entity, supported by property taxes. The legislature intended that before a county legislative body proceed to consider creation of such an entity, it must have before it a request of at least 20 percent of the freeholders in the affected area or, if that number is fewer than 500, a majority of the freeholders.

"Their property taxes will fund the municipal entity, and a demonstration of at least that threshold of support was viewed by the Legislature as a necessary prerequisite to further hearings and action by a county legislative body."

Bill Lloyd, attorney for the Brown County Fire Protection District, said the petition to transfer the case to the Supreme Court reiterates the same things the plaintiffs have already argued before both Judge McGillivray and the Court of Appeals.

"The Trial Court Judge and the three Court of Appeals Judges have unanimously answered those statements and arguments," Mr. Lloyd said. "The four Judges found that the Fire District Ordinance is a valid local initiative to provide improved emergency and fire protection services as provided and described in the Ordinance."

According to Mr. Young, there is no guarantee that the Indiana Supreme Court will hear the case, as it is selective in the cases it reviews, but Mr. Lloyd said it might in order "to affirm and reemphasize the validity of this local government initiative by its decision."

"I do expect other counties will be utilizing the benefit of this legislative method for emergency services reform to thereby serve their communities," he concluded. "This is a community safety issue that we must support and see successfully prevail."

[Back to Fire](#)



October 13, 2008

Couple 'were always together'

Family, friends recall friendly, helpful pair

*BY MICHELLE MANCHIR
STAFF WRITER*

Mary Ann Musselwhite wore Sunday what was among the armful of items salvageable in Saturday morning's fatal fire in a Richmond mobile home park: a black T-shirt featuring a poster from the movie "Scarface."

For her the T-shirt is more than a memory of her son, Randy Webb, who adored the film and died in the fire on Salisbury Road.

For Mary Ann, the unburned T-shirt is a sign that her 29-year-old son is at peace.

"This is the only shirt that wasn't burnt and it says 'the world is yours' and Scarface is (Randy's thing)," she said. "... That's my sign from him that he's fine. ... And I don't have to worry."

Tears came Sunday in the Richmond Mobile Home Park as family and friends of Webb, and his girlfriend, Cassie Lowrance, 26, gathered and recalled their personalities and their affectionate two-year relationship.

The pair died in a fire that ravaged their mobile home around 3:26 a.m. Saturday.

The Indiana State Fire Marshal's Office has preliminarily called the fire an accidental electrical blaze, although it is still under investigation pending autopsy reports, said State Fire Marshal James Greeson in an e-mail Sunday.

Meanwhile, many of the mobile home park's members were outside Sunday, hugging family members of the couple and studying the site of the tragedy.

Neighbors of Webb and Lowrance said they were nice people, the kind who wouldn't ignore a stranger's "hello."

"(Cassie) was just the sweetest thing you could ever find. Anything you ask them to do they would do it," said Jeanne Vansickle, a park resident.

Webb sometimes served as a handyman for some of the park's residents, responding to whatever electrical or maintenance problems residents were having, Vansickle said.

He was a fast-talking jokester, his family recalled, who "always, always, always had a smile," Mary Ann Musselwhite said.

"Even if he didn't know you, he'd come right in," said Monica Lee, a park resident. Webb also previously worked at Envirotech Extrusions, Inc.

Lowrance graduated from Richmond High School in the early 2000s, said her mother, Kathleen Leverette, on Sunday, her eyes wet.

Leverette said her only daughter was a family-oriented, fun-loving woman who craved homemade pizza and adored her 2-year-old son Shaun. She was often seen strolling the mobile home park with him nearby.

Shaun was staying with his father in Fort Wayne when the fire took place.

Lowrance loved the movies "The Wizard of Oz" and "Dirty Dancing."

"We even knew the dances, thank you very much," Musselwhite said, laughing.

The couple's joint memorial service is noon Tuesday at Community Family Funeral Home. They will rest in peace side by side, family said.

"Where one went the other one went," Leverette said. "They were always together."

[Back to Fire](#)

Associated Press

1:09 PM CDT, October 12, 2008

RICHMOND, Ind. - Authorities say a young couple was killed in a mobile home after it caught fire after 3 a.m. Saturday.

Kyle Chapman is the manager of the Richmond Mobile Home Park. He says neighbors pounded on the windows of the home in an effort to awaken Randy Webb and Cassie Lowrance, a couple in their 20s.

But Chapman says it was too late, and flames were already coming through the roof and out the sides of their mobile home.

Webster Township Volunteer Fire Chief [Dennis Hollingsworth](#) says the fire may have been sparked by a space heater, but the Indiana State Fire Marshal was still investigating.

No one else in the mobile home park was hurt. Chapman says Lowrance's 2-year-old son was staying with his father in Fort Wayne when the fire started.

[Back to Fire](#)



Flood benefits run out for Ind. families

Monday, October 13, 2008 | 5:12 PM



By Sarah Schulte

CHICAGO (WLS) -- Almost a dozen Lake County, Ind., families are looking for a place to stay after flood benefits ran out on Monday.

The families were forced from their homes by September floods and have been living in temporary shelters.

Monday is moving day for the Schmidt family, who has been living at Merrillville's Comfort Suites since they had to leave their flooded home.

"We knew this was the last day but we were trying to figure out where we were going. No one told us," said William Schmidt, flood victim.

The Schmidts are headed to a shelter in Gary that the state of Indiana and FEMA have set up for displaced families.

"Maybe perhaps some folks didn't get the message, but, again, there were fliers put under everyone's door. There were phone calls made everyone to. Every time the meals were delivered the message has been consistent and down to the fact that we came to their lobby," said Isaac Randolph, State of Indiana

The Schmidt children have not been to school since the floods because they have not had transportation.

"They're doing fine right now. They're just upset because we have to move again," said Kathy Schmidt, flood victim.

Displaced families will be placed in rental properties next. Until then, they'll stay at a shelter.

"The state handles the security deposits for the rental property and then FEMA takes care of the rent itself and then FEMA works with these families to determine how much they qualify to mitigate their property and get them back into their homes. Or find another avenue," said Randolph.

Indiana officials are asking residents with rental properties in nearby communities to offer help. The Schmidts will be harder to place, according to state officials, because they have five children and therefore need a larger space.

[Back to Flooding](#)

Flood families move out of hotels, into shelters

BY

CARMEN

McCOLLUM

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219.662.5337 | Tuesday, October 14, 2008

GARY | Monday was checkout day for the 50 or so families who have lived at the Majestic Star Hotel since floodwaters chased them from their Gary and Lake Station homes.

Representatives from the state and the Federal Emergency Management Agency were at the hotel at 11:30 a.m. Monday as they families left their temporary quarters. It was the last day the state provided housing vouchers for recent flood victims that allowed them to stay in local hotels and motels.

Some residents from Lake Station said they feel like they've been abandoned by their community and by FEMA - especially as they waited for transportation in the parking lot of the hotel with their belongings.

FEMA and state representatives arranged for a pair of buses to transport families to the Calumet Township trustee's shelter at 1900 W. 41st Ave., where they said food would be plentiful. Some residents opted against going to the trustee's shelter, saying they had somewhere else to go.

Jamilah Fraser, FEMA spokeswoman, reiterated that victims need to call 211, and someone would be available immediately to help them with their specific issues.

"We are working with people to find a long-term solution to their problems," she said.

"Gov. (Mitch) Daniels wants to be sure that everyone is taken care of. Notices have been slipped under the doors at hotel rooms. We're here to help people who don't have anywhere to go," Fraser said.

Before FEMA arrived, William Conklin, 40, of Lake Station, had been prepared to sit outside the hotel with his few belongings until he could find somewhere else to stay. Conklin, who lived with his mother on 29th Avenue, said he and his sister, Donna Conklin, stayed at Majestic Star Hotel while their mother stayed with a sister in Hammond.

The displaced Lake Station residents said they received rides to the hotel through Lake Station Mayor Keith Soderquist's office, which provided transportation via school buses. No other transportation has been offered since then, William Conklin said.

"I haven't been able to go to work in a couple of weeks. I'd prefer to stay closer to where I live so I can get back and forth to work," he said. Conklin also said he has food stamps, but he had no way to get to a grocery store to buy food.

Amy Pitts, 24, of Lake Station, has been in the area less than a year, and had just gotten settled with her two children at Riverside Mobile Home Park along Deep River.

Pitts said she lost everything in the flood, and was traveling with garbage bags full of clothes donated to her and her children, Melissa Pitts, who is 1, and Anthony Felipe, who will turn 5 year on Wednesday.

"I'm not going to be able to do much for him. I'm just hoping to get a cake for his birthday," she said Monday as she made up beds for herself and her children at the Calumet Township trustee's shelter.

Bonnie Schnaedter, 52, and her 72-year-old mother, Judith Rokowski, also are both displaced from their Riverside mobile homes.

Schnaedter said once she gets her FEMA check she may be ready to "get out of Indiana for good."

HOUSING

Officials said they have identified more than 1,000 rental units to help people who still need housing. They said it's important individuals apply to FEMA if they still need assistance with immediate housing.

Those with property damage from September's storms are urged to apply for help from FEMA online at <http://www.fema.gov> or by calling (800) 621-FEMA (3362), or TTY (800) 462-7585 for those with speech or hearing impairment.

[Back to Flooding](#)

Post-Tribune

Munster church helps flood victims

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/lake/1217382.munrally.article>)

October 13, 2008

By Michelle L. Quinn Post-Tribune correspondent

MUNSTER -- Coming to Northwest Indiana has been an experience the likes of which the Rev. Michael Gillespie has never seen in 41 years of being a pastor.

He told the packed house during the Project Hope Benefit for the Munster flood victims at Family Christian Center on Sunday night that he and wife Brenda have been at the helm of South Side Christian Church for 21½ months. In that time, they've seen two tornadoes and a flood all but wipe out their church.

"What a way to be welcomed," the pastor said amiably. "But I'm just going to tell you, if there are any locusts, it's not my fault."

A consortium of Munster congregations banded together once the Sept. 12 flood swept through and demolished much of the town's northwest side. On Sunday night, they didn't forget the other towns that experienced the same damage.

"My message tonight is that there are other areas devastated by the flood," said Kathy Bonaventura, director for the United Way Regional Volunteer Center. "There are 100 families in Gary and they're getting out (of temporary shelter today). Ninety-five percent of them are elderly and have no idea what to do.

"Let's be God's children and help them rebuild their homes safe, sanitary and secure."

Munster Town Council President Helen Brown was amazed by the event, which blended music performed by the Munster High School Band, the school's African Drum Corps and various congregations in the consortium with video footage produced by Family Christian. She said 1,100 homes have suffered damage in the flood, which translates into 1,100 families facing grueling emotional challenges.

"This is a wonder to behold," Brown said. "We're so grateful (to the churches) for all you've done. You're wonderful neighbors."

Beth Grauvogel, a resident in the area, expressed in the video her sense of overwhelming gratitude for the help sent by Family Christian. That church sent out crews of volunteers to help people muck and gut their homes.

"You were total strangers, but now you're forever friends," she said

[Back to Flooding](#)

Post-Tribune

Some Lake Station flooding victims moved from hotel to homeless shelter

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/lake/1219500.lshousing.article>)

October 14, 2008

BY [KAREN SNELLING](#) Post-Tribune staff writer

More than a dozen Lake Station residents forced from their homes by flooding last month moved into a Calumet Township homeless shelter Monday after their state-issued hotel vouchers expired.

"We have no money and no place to go. I can't go back to my house because it's been deemed unsafe," said Eric Holt, who checked out of the Comfort Suites in Merrillville with his wife and two children along with 19 other families. In total, about 250 families ended stays at area hotels, according to the state Department of Homeland Security.

Lorene Thorpe, 55, of Lake Station, said she hasn't received any help from FEMA even though she has filled out all the necessary forms. Like Holt, her mobile home flooded.

Stephen DeBlasio, coordinating officer for FEMA's Indianapolis office, said his office has not been able to reach Thorpe to schedule an inspection of her property. "I have a cell phone and it's on 24 hours a day. I haven't received a call from FEMA. And when I call them, I just get the runaround," Thorpe said, as she sat on her belongings piled outside the hotel.

Andy Miller, director of the Indiana Office of Disaster Recovery, said a number of those who found themselves with no place to live failed to apply for help from FEMA.

FEMA is providing up to three months of rental housing to flood victims. The state is providing the funds displaced families need for security deposits. Miller said as of Friday FEMA had provided Lake County families with 1,100 apartments and rental homes. The agency has provided \$10 million in financial assistance.

Joan Boyd, who was temporarily housed at Comfort Suites, is one of the people FEMA helped move into a new apartment after hers was flooded.

Boyd said she received a list of three rental properties on and finalized the agreement to move into the Tiberon Trails complex on Sunday.

"It's was a question of doing everything that the state officials and FEMA said to do," Boyd said while waiting for a ride to her new apartment.

Meanwhile, William Schmidt arrived at the shelter with his wife and five children. Schmidt said besides the hotel vouchers he has not received any help from FEMA, although he expects to get a check for \$964 for housing expenses.

DeBlasio said FEMA will provide Schmidt with funds to repair or replace the contents of his mobile home that are not covered by insurance.

But Schmidt said FEMA's records are wrong. "I don't have flood insurance. My neighbor does and they're getting us confused," he said.

Contact Karen Snelling at 648-3106 or ksnelling@post-trib.com

[Back to Flooding](#)



THE NEWS-DISPATCH

Thursday, October 09, 2008



FEMA, state officials warn of post-flood scams

Thursday, October 09, 2008

Officials giving tips for hiring contractors, avoiding con artists.

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have issued a warning to Indiana residents affected by recent flooding to be aware of repair scams.

"Be alert for door-to-door solicitors who hand out fliers and promise quick insurance, quick building permits and quick repairs," said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Steve DeBlasio. "And watch out for folks who ask for large cash deposits or advance payments in full."

DeBlasio also said some fraudulent types may try to access personal information by claiming to be FEMA-certified. He said FEMA neither certifies nor endorses repair contractors.

Any FEMA worker who contacts residents will have a photo ID's and does not handle money or charge fees, DeBlasio said.

FEMA employees and damage inspectors will also be able to confirm a case number if asked, while a scam artist will not know the case number, he said.

"We are asking residents to be cautious," said IDHS Executive Director Joe Wainscott Jr. "By following standard business practices, you can protect yourself against dishonest people."

These tips are offered for hiring contractors:

- Get a written estimate. Compare services and prices before making a final decision and read the fine print.
- Check references. A reliable contractor is willing to provide names of previous customers.
- Ask for proof of insurance. Make sure the contractor carries general liability insurance and workers' compensation.
- Use licensed contractors.
- Insist on a written contract. A complete contract should clearly state all tasks to be performed, all associated costs and the payment schedule. Never sign a blank contract or one with blank spaces.
- Get guarantees. Any guarantees made by the contractor should be written into the contract and clearly state what is guaranteed and how long the guarantee is valid.
- Make final payments when the work is completed. Do not sign completion papers or make the final payment until the work is done to your satisfaction.
- Pay by credit card or check. Payment by credit card allows appeals and recouping a disputed amount; payment by check with clear notation gives a record that links payments with completed jobs. Never pay in cash, and do not pay for the whole transaction in one lump sum.

Anyone affected should be suspicious of anyone who offers to increase the amount of your disaster damage grant.

[Back to Flooding](#)

Church's fundraiser for flood victims encourages more volunteering, donating

BY

DAN

HINKEL

dhinkel@nwitimes.com

219.933.4183 | Sunday, October 12, 2008

MUNSTER | A homeowner can spend time, money and immeasurable effort keeping a house clean and repaired, and then rain falls, a river floods and the water washes everything away.

Senior Minister Mike Gillespie of South Side Christian Church of Munster encouraged perspective Sunday at a flood fundraiser at Family Christian Center.

"It's only stuff," he said.

Sunday night's Project Rescue rally, benefit and Christian rock concert focused on local churches' Munster-based cleanup efforts after September's flood. Attendees took in worshipful guitar rock, patriotic brass band tunes and African drum music, along with a documentary video about the flood cleanup and speeches by local clergy and politicians.

Speakers encouraged the crowd to continue to help.

"We think this is a sprint, but it's not," said Pastor Steve Conger of Ridge United Methodist Church of Munster.

"Let's see this through to the end," said Kathy Bonaventura, supervisor of the Lake Area United Way volunteer centers.

The event took in \$50,000 Sunday night, said Pastor David Jordan Allen of Family Christian Center. Organizers hope to pull in a total of \$100,000 in coming weeks, Allen said.

Munster Town Council President Helen Brown offered thanks.

"My heart is so full for everything everyone here has done," Brown said.

Gillespie moved to the region months ago, in time to witness a flood and a tornado. He is not to blame, he joked.

"If there are any locusts, they are not my fault," he said.

[Back to Flooding](#)



Ind. residents pledge to rebuild

Sunday, October 12, 2008 | 10:50 PM



CHICAGO (WLS) -- Flood-ravaged Munster, Indiana, rallied Sunday night with a promise to rebuild as a community.

Residents gathered for a benefit concert called Project Rescue at the Family Christian Center. The event featured performances by school bands and church groups.

Scores of families are homeless as a result of September's devastating storms, and the Sunday event's goal was to unite and help people across northwest Indiana who are struggling.

"The flood and the clean-up effort following the flood have been extremely challenging for Munster and the other affected local communities. Over 1,100 homes in Munster have been devastated. This means 1,100 families have had their lives disrupted," said Munster Town Council President Helen Brown.

Sunday's gathering also was about providing hope to those who need it. The admission price was two cans of food or other non-perishable items.

[Back to Flooding](#)

FEMA providing help for residents applying for storm aid

By MATT THACKER

Matt.Thacker@newsandtribune.com

October 09, 2008 11:37 am

— CHARLESTOWN — Frank Craig lives with his wife and three children in a trailer in Otisco. When the Sept. 14 wind storm hit Southern Indiana, he feared for their lives.

“We didn’t know if we were even going survive the storm,” he said.

Once the wind passed, they had no power for days. The family lost two refrigerators and a freezer full of food, he said. On Wednesday, he received an emergency food stamp card provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

“It will help a bunch, because I’m on disability,” he said. “I didn’t know how we were going to make it.”

On Friday, Clark County was one of 10 new Indiana counties approved for federal government assistance. FEMA opened a “one-stop” disaster assistance center Wednesday at the Clark County Fairgrounds at 9608 Ind. 62 in Charlestown.

It will be open 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. through Tuesday, except Sunday.

At the center, officials from the Family and Social Services Administration, Department of Workforce Development, Department of Insurance and Department of Health were on hand to answer questions and provide assistance to those impacted by the disaster.

People also could apply for disaster food stamp assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Applicants are required to fit at least one of six criterion, which includes losing food, having damage to a home or reducing family income because of the storm.

While income is a factor, people may still qualify even if they would not normally qualify for food stamps.

“It’s much more generous than regular food stamps,” said Zach Main, director of the Division of Family Resources for the Family and Social Services Administration.

Main said the cards will be activated the morning after a successful application. Officials were expecting a large turnout as word continues to spread.

Main said they set up a similar operation in Northern Indiana and had 12,000 people come through their doors. While they are not expecting that many here, they do expect lines to grow throughout the week, as the temporary center serves Clark and nearby counties.

FEMA is on hand to provide help with completing disaster relief applications.

“As soon as Clark County was declared a disaster area, we responded very quickly,” said Bill Lehman, FEMA public affairs officer.

FEMA assistance includes grants for temporary housing and home repairs and low-cost loans. FEMA can provide up to \$28,800 for people who are uninsured or underinsured, Lehman said. Residents and business owners also can apply for FEMA assistance by registering online at

www.fema.gov/assistance or by calling 800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired.

Lehman said FEMA is in the process of assessing again whether Floyd County meets the threshold to be declared a federal disaster area. He said approval is based on a formula that takes into account county population and the amount of damage reported.

He did not know if a disaster-assistance center would be set up in Floyd County if it is approved. "I think they want to, but I don't know," he said.

There were about 60 employees from various agencies who volunteered to work at the center. Many came from different parts of the state, while some were local.

Julia Robinson, who works for Arbor Education and Training and lives in Jeffersonville, said she offered to work at the center because she understands what some people are going through. She was one of many without power for a week.

"Although our devastation wasn't as severe, I did find myself in a storm that really scared me," she said. "It showed me a little bit of what others are going through."

One-stop disaster-assistance center

- Who: Family and Social Services Administration, Department of Workforce Development, Department of Insurance and Department of Health
- What: Wind storm victims can apply for FEMA assistance, food stamps or other aid
- Where: Clark County Fairgrounds, 9608 Ind. 62 in Charlestown
- When: 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. through Tuesday, except Sunday

[Back to Severe Weather](#)

CROTHERSVILLE TIMES

FEMA Adds Jackson County To Disaster Aid List

Officials with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have added Jackson and nine other counties to the list of those eligible for disaster assistance as a result of the Sept. 14 windstorm.

Federal and state programs will help homeowners, renters and business owners bounce back from severe storms and flooding that accompanied the remnants of Hurricane Ike into the state.

Residents with property damages in the following counties are eligible to apply for a wide range of state and federal disaster assistance programs: Clark, Crawford, Dearborn, Jackson, Knox, Lawrence, Martin, Pike, Spencer and Switzerland counties. Federal help includes:

- Grants for temporary disaster housing assistance and home repairs
- Grants to help meet serious disaster-related needs and expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs
- U. S. Small Business Administration low-interest loans for homeowners, renters and business owners to repair or replace real or personal property and for housing repair.

In addition, an array of state programs will be offered.

"We're committed to delivering assistance wherever it's needed and to making sure that every qualified individual, family and business receives the help needed to get back on the road to recovery," said IDHS Executive Director Joe Wainscott, Jr., state coordinator for disaster assistance programs, on behalf of Gov. Daniels.

Affected individuals and business owners may apply for assistance by calling the toll-free application number, 1-800-621-FEMA (3362). An application can also be completed online at www.fema.gov.

Those with a speech or hearing impairment may call TTY 1-800-462-7585.

Officials remind residents who have already filled out damage report forms for state and local offices or voluntary agencies that they must apply to FEMA to be considered for federal assistance.

Applicants are asked to provide the following information:

- Current phone number
- Social Security number, if available
- A general list of damages and losses from the storms and flooding
- Insurance policy number, or agent and company name if you have property insurance
- Household financial information
- The address of the damaged property and directions to reach it

Counties previously designated as eligible for assistance are: Harrison, Jefferson, Jennings, Lake, LaPorte and Porter counties.

[Back to Severe Weather](#)

Floyd County still waiting for disaster declaration

By DANIEL SUDDEATH

Daniel.Suddeath@newsandtribune.com

October 08, 2008 11:46 am

— New Albany Mayor Doug England continues to push Gov. Mitch Daniels and federal officials to include Floyd County in the disaster relief aid grouping.

Surrounding counties including Clark, Harrison and Crawford have been added to the list by President George Bush. Federal assistance is included with the classification, something England said the city and county needs.

“The governor has not declared Floyd County a disaster area, though he is reviewing it right now,” England said Tuesday. “He said it looks like a pretty good possibility.”

Approximately \$1 million was used from rainy day funds to cope with disaster relief, overtime for city personnel and other costs. The City Council approved \$250,000 be transferred to pay for contractual services used to help with cleanup.

“Our clean up went well. There were no disasters, no deaths. People were very cooperative,” England said.

England said city departments responded well to the disaster but now they need help with the bills. He did show confidence that New Albany would fight through the financial hurt caused by the wind storm, saying officials would make the necessary decisions to get the city through it.

“There are always trials and tribulations,” England said.

Terry Herthel, emergency management agency director for Floyd County, has been compiling damage reports since the storm hit. The information is vital in deterring whether the county will receive disaster aid.

Congressman Baron Hill said he is pleased so far with Bush’s decision to include Clark and other counties on the disaster relief list. He said the damage in Southern Indiana was astounding.

“Hurricane Ike left hundreds of thousands in the area without power for days. Many homes and businesses were severely damaged by the high winds,” Hill stated in a news release.

“If my office can be of help in any way, please do not hesitate to call.”

Hill’s Jeffersonville office can be reached at 1-866-440-1321.

If Floyd County is included on the disaster list, assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, grants to help meet serious disaster-related needs and expenses not covered by insurance or other assistance programs.

Low-interest loans for homeowners, renters and business owners to repair or replace real or personal property and for housing repair would also be eligible for assistance, according to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Applications for assistance in counties declared an emergency are handled by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, and usually require a phone call that lasts 20-30

minutes.

Among the information required of applicants is gross income, a list of damages, insurance policy number or an agent and company name if they have property insurance and Social Security number.

[Back to Severe Weather](#)